IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Jerry M. Conley, Director

ASHTON HATCHERY

Annual Report

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by
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ASHTON HATCHERY

ABSTRACT

The requirements of the Ashton Fish Hatchery for the Idaho Fish and Game Department are to raise fingerling rainbow, brook, brown and cutthroat trout for six counties mainly in Region 6. A few rainbow catchables are also raised for early spring planting in year round waters.

Most all of the other rainbow catchables are transplanted in from Hagerman and Nampa hatcheries.

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OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Ashton Fish Hatchery are to raise 300,000 brown trout to a size of three to four inches. They will be used to stock Camas Creek and Willow Creek with the remainder stocked where allocated out each year. It is also to raise 700,000 cutthroat trout to be planted each fall in Henrys Lake. These fish are usually grown to three or four inches. Another objective is to incubate and culture 500,000 rainbow eggs and raise fish to an approximate size of two to four inches. These fish are planted in dry beds, sloughs and springs in the Lorenzo area south of Rexburg. Sand Creek refuge ponds and Ririe Reservoir also receive their allotments each year.

Ashton Hatchery has been holding over fifty to sixty thousand rainbow catchables to be planted in areas around the hatchery. These areas are open to year-round fishing starting in the early spring. This allows a few fish to be harvested for those people who never give up, no matter what the weather. It also helps the public relations in this area.

Each year we have been receiving a few grayling eggs from Wyoming. These eggs are hatched out in jars and planted in Horseshoe Lake in Fremont County. Some were also shipped to the Mullan Hatchery this year to be stocked in Region 1.

We also have the objective to work with the residents and sportsmen in the area to enhance ideas of the Department and to improve public relations.

INTRODUCTION

The Ashton Hatchery is located in Fremont County, one mile south and one mile west of the town of Ashton. It has an elevation of 5,260 feet above sea level.

Water is received from Black Springs. It has a flow of six cfs and a temperature of fifty degrees.

There are eight fingerling raceways three feet wide by sixty feet long and four large raceways seven feet wide by two hundred feet long.

The hatchery building contains a work shop, feed room, office, an incubator room and twelve hatchery vats. Approximately 2,000,000 eggs can be incubated at one time and the hatchery vats can handle up to 800,000 fry for a short time before thinning down to approximately 360,000 two-inch fish.

FISH PRODUCTION

This year our production was as follows:

	Length	Fish	Pounds
Rainbow catchable	6" +	67,073	12,300
Rainbow fingerling	3"-6"	101,440	3,875
Rainbow fry	0"-3"	358,980	2,065
Cutthroat fry	0"-3"	393,208	428
Brown fingerling	3"-6"	98,588	606
Brown fry	0"-3"	330,462	950
Brook Assinica fingerling	3"-6"	3,355	61
Brook Temiscamie fingerling	3"-6"	17,160	130
Cutthroat & rainbow hybrid fry	0"-3"	16,200	6
Grayling fry	0" +	20,000	1
TOTAL		1,406,466	20,422

The weight of fish raised this year is down from previous years because of changing to fingerling production and also because of planting fish out early to prepare for pond construction.

FISH FEED USED

Four hundred fifty pounds of Oregon moist food was used to start fry feeding and 20,700 pounds of dry feed was fed for a grand total of 21,150 pounds food fed. This created a conversion of 1.4. The cost of food for the year was $4,145.07.

FISH DISEASES

Bacterial Gill, Hexamita and Strawberry diseases are the main diseases of the Ashton Hatchery. These are usually controlled by chemicals but never cured.

Along with over-crowding of the ponds, the water volume is so low we have a slow turnover in the ponds. This creates the opportunity for diseases to start.

FISH STOCKING IN AREA

Usually by spring the hatchery ponds are pretty crowded. We are able to plant fish in Lorenzo area springs that have constant water temperatures and thus alleviate our crowded conditions. Our planting catalogue has an alloted planting time for this usually in March and April. We are then able to hold remaining fish and plant them during summer months.

STATION IMPROVEMENTS

This past September fish were planted and transferred to other hatcheries to allow ponds to be dried up for construction.

Our spring pond has been a source of algae and silt for many years causing undue labor and time. Many eggs have been smothered and fry have contracted Gill disease because of these conditions. This year the pond has been filled in with gravel and dirt to alleviate this problem. The springs were capped and water was piped down to a main control box going to the raceways and hatchery building. We are currently just finishing the project which has been done under severe weather conditions by our own construction crew.

The construction crew will have to come back next spring and finish the project. As it looks now, we have about the same amount of water or maybe a little more. It has taken about 30,000 yards of gravel and dirt to fill in the pond. There will have to be more fill put in this spring when the weather warms up.

The top sections of our large raceways were divided. This will give us more small ponds to put our different species of fish in and make control over them easier.

A new garage, which has been needed for years, was built onto residence number two by hatchery personnel.

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

Ashton Hatchery is just off the main route to Yellowstone Park. We, therefore, have a lot of hatchery visitors coming in during summer months. Most people are satisfied with the establishment and feel the department is doing a good job stocking this area.

We have a few native residents that are discouraged by the filling in of the hatchery pond. They felt it enhanced the beauty of the hatchery setting because it was always visited by ducks and swans. During the winter months moose, at times, could even be seen by the ponds.

HATCHERY PERSONNEL

The Ashton Hatchery is run by two permanent personnel. Usually a CETA worker or department aid is given to help care for lawns and fish stocking during the summer months.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The domestic water tank should be taken from residence number two and installed in a small building outside. This would make it easier to work on and would be better in case of a fire in any hatchery building.

Future plans should call for catching the springs on the east side of the creek and piping them to two small raceways on the creek bank by the hatchery building.

Next spring, land has to be leveled out where the pond was. To enhance the beauty of the area, shrubbery or something should be planted.

The settling ponds will have to be dredged next spring.